

REMARKS

Claims 1-28 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1 and 9-11 are amended. Further, drawing Figures 22A, 23A-23E, 24A-24E and 35 are replaced by the attached replacement drawing sheets to include the label "Related Art." No new matter is added. Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

I. Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants gratefully acknowledge that the Office Action indicates that claim 28 is allowed, and claims 5-7 and 11-27 will be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the features of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claim 11 is amended to independent form to incorporate all the features of original claim 1. No new matter is added. Thus, claim 11 is allowable. Claims 12-27 depend from claim 11, and thus are also allowable.

II. Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §102(a)

Claims 1-4 and 8-10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(a) over U.S. Patent No. 6,540,322 to Usui et al. ("Usui"). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Usui does not teach or suggest an ink guide member including "a reinforcing rib on an upper surface thereof" and "a channel of predetermined length on the lower surface thereof," as recited in independent claims 1, 9 and 10.

The Office Action asserts that Usui teaches an ink guide member 50 having a channel 60 of a predetermined length (Fig. 14, and col. 11, lines 54-58 and col. 12, lines 12-22). Notwithstanding these assertions, Usui does not teach or suggest an ink guide member including a reinforcing rib on an upper surface thereof and a channel on a lower surface thereof, as set forth in independent claims 1, 9 and 10.

Usui teaches an ink jet recording apparatus including a capping device 11 including cap units 37, 38 (Figure 1). Usui teaches that the cap units 37, 38 may include a porous plate

50 engagable into a cap member 16 (Fig. 14C). The porous plate 50 includes through holes 51 and a channel formed by supporting portions 501 having a predetermined length and located on a lower surface thereof (Fig. 14C, and col. 11, line 33 - col. 12, line 21). Usui does not disclose, teach or suggest a reinforcing rib provided on an upper surface of the porous plate 50.

The ink guide members of claims 1, 9 and 10 include a reinforcing rib provided to enhance the strength and rigidity of the ink guide member, so that the ink guide member functions properly and is not damaged by the plurality of communication holes formed on opposite sides of the reinforcing rib (for example, Fig. 4, and specification page 21, line 19 through page 22, line 2). The capping device of Usui does not provide such an advantage. For at least these reasons, Usui does not disclose, teach or suggest the ink guide members of claims 1, 9 and 10.

Therefore, claims 1, 9 and 10 are patentable over Usui. Claims 2-8 depend from claim 1, and thus are also patentable over Usui for at least the reasons set forth above, as well as for the additional features they recite. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

III. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-27, in addition to previously allowed claim 28, are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachments:

Amendment Transmittal

Replacement Sheets (Figs. 22A-22B, 23A-23E, 24A-24E, 34 and 35)

Date: February 23, 2005

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<p>DEPOSIT ACCOUNT USE AUTHORIZATION Please grant any extension necessary for entry; Charge any fee due to our Deposit Account No. 15-0461</p>
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Amendments to the Drawings:

The attached replacement drawing sheets makes changes to Figs. 22A, 23A-23E, 24A-24E and 35, and replaces the original sheets with Figs. 22A-22B, 23A-23E, 24A-24E, 34 and 35.

Attachment: Replacement Sheets